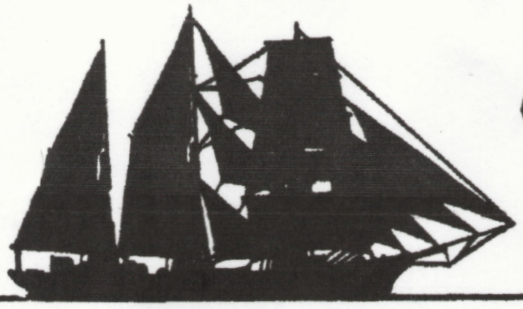


Searchlight: Ship to Shore News from R/V Regina Maris

Vol. 2, No. 13
At Sea
Straight of Belle Isle
Sunday, July 31, 1977

This has been a good week - full of good progress, good sailing and good weather. But what week would not be good that began in the majestic, untouched surroundings of Port Manvers, Labrador, our most northern port, this expedition, at anchor with the sound of a roaring waterfall 100 yards away for background music?

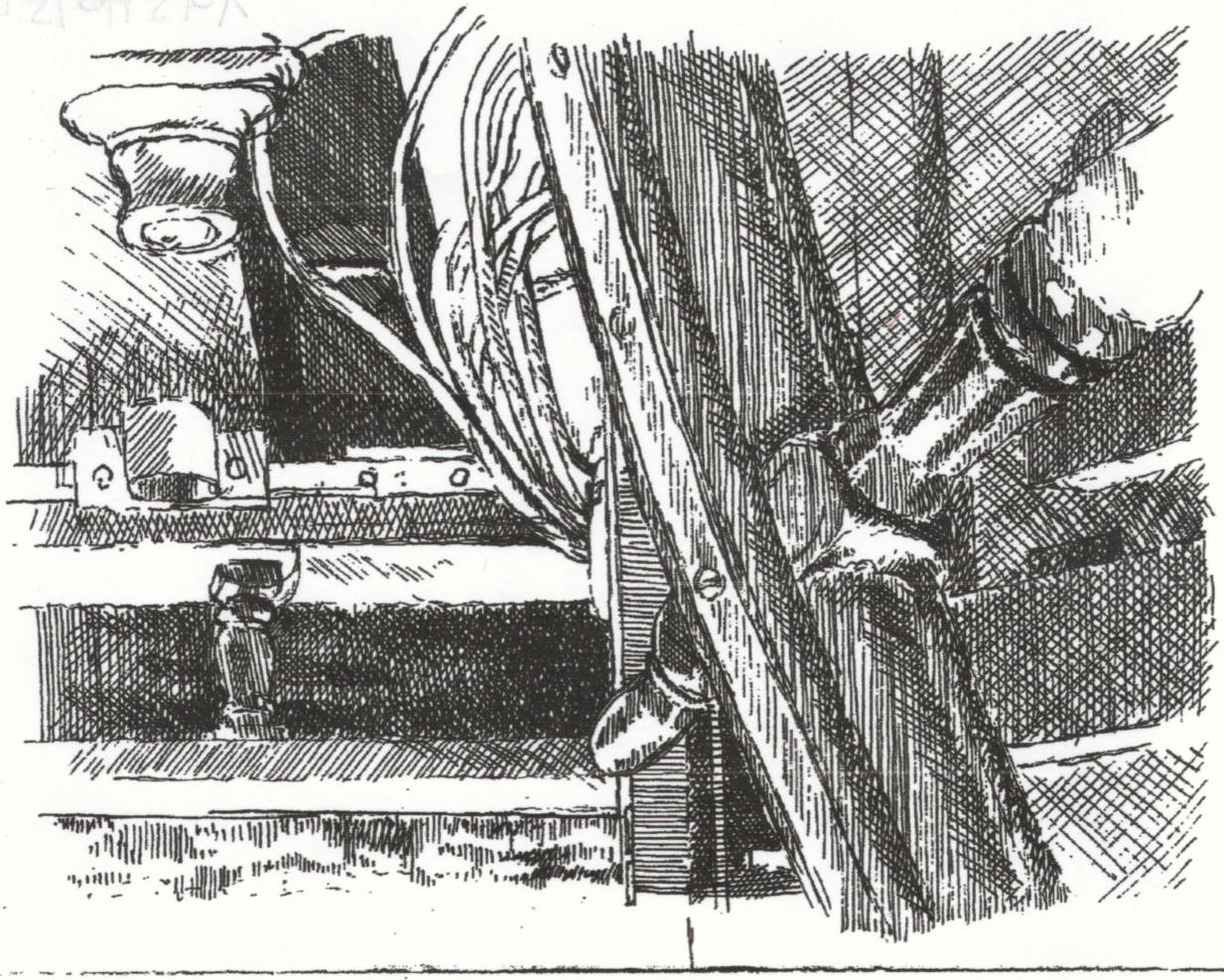
It was overcast, with a light drizzle when we motored out of the narrow entrance of that unforgetable harbor, flanked by 3000 foot mountains. But visibility was good enough to see clearly the several icebergs still grouped around the entrance. By the time we were clear of the black mass of Sentinel Rock, ten miles off shore, the sun was peeking out, the air was warm (10° centigrade), and life began to look pretty rosy as we shaped a course well off shore. This, we hoped, would take us clear outside the numerous, only partly charted rocks and islands which extend up to 15 miles off the Labrador coast, as well as the many bergs and growlers which the Labrador current seems to concentrate along the 25 fathom line.

Four days of nearly continuous calm, sunshine and motoring brought us past Hamilton inlet to Hawke Harbor on southern Labrador - the site of an abandoned whaling station and summer home of Sam Turnbull and his family. This year we boldly motored through the 75 foot wide entrance (I didn't dare do it last year) and anchored off Sam's house. We had a good visit with them - lots of talk about fish - "fair salmon, but no fish until last night", we heard. Visits to the station, which burned 15 years ago, and bathing in the lake behind it were marred only slightly by the abundant mosquitoes. Rich Mula spent most of the evening repairing Sam's generator so Mrs. Turnbull could use her washing machine, a favor which was rewarded with a gift of enough fish to feed us all on Friday eve.

Since leaving Hawke Harbor early Friday we've been beating to windward under sail alone. Lots of time to do the 120 miles to St. Anthony, and the desire to see what square rigger passages are really like have combined to give us all a wonderfull three days. Tonight we have had a critique of the science and teaching program which quickly blossomed to include everything. Revealing, rewarding, and sometimes surprising comments emerged, not the least being the nearly universal great satisfaction of having had the three days under sail alone.

Nothing is perfect, and this week's problem, like the previous two, has been lack of whales - 5 sperm, a couple of humpbacks, and 3 good sightings of Lagenorhyncus Albirostris (white beaked dolphins) has been the total score. We had expected more as we re-entered the warmer (11° centegrade) southern Labrador waters. Maybe Newfoundland will be better. Meanwhile, changing plankton populations have provided the scientific stimulation.

Dr. George Nichols, Jr.
Master, Regina Maris



Ocean Research and Education Society
51 Commercial Wharf Boston, Ma. 02110

Nonprofit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Boston, MA
Permit No. 58469

Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Harcourt

Tewksbury, MA